

Message Text

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ACTION PRS-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 SPC-03 SAM-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-20 DRC-01

/085 W

----- 081030

R 180905Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5014

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO CJCS WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HPU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 2404

SECSTATE FOR S/PRS VEST

SECDEF FOR ASD/PA FRIEDHEIM

E.O 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, CB

SUBJ: DISTORTED UPI STORY

1. ON 15 FEBRUARY UPI REPORTER LYNN C. NEWLAND FILED A STORY ON CHMEDTC MAJGEN CLELAND'S DEPARTURE WRITTEN FROM EXCHANGES AT OUR REGULAR BIWEEKLY PRESS BRIEFING AND CLEARED BY ME AND CHMEDTC.

2. IN PROCESS OF REWRITE, UPI NEW YORK OFFICE PRODUCED A LEAD PARAGRAPH WHOSE INITIAL PHRASE ("AN AMERICAN GENERAL WITH A FRONT ROW SEAT AT THE CAMBODIAN WAR SAID FRIDAY CAMBODIAN TROOPS HAVE BORNE UP WELL DEFENSIVELY") IS CONSISTENT WITH THE STORY AS FILED, BUT IT THEN ADDS A PHRASE ("BUT THEY(CAMBODIAN TROOPS) LACK THE INITIATIVE TO LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL OFFENSIVE") WHICH HAS NO RPT NO BASIS IN THE STORY AS FILED, WHICH IS FACTUALLY INCORRECT (THE FANK IS ON THE OFFENSIVE BOTH TO THE NORTHWEST AND TO THE SOUTH OF PHNOM PENH), AND WHICH

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CAN BE EXPLOITED BY THE ENEMY AGAINST THE EFFORT WE

ARE MAKING HERE.

3. BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT UPI MANAGEMENT FOCUS ON THIS DISTORTION, SO THAT OTHER SUCH CASES CAN BE AVOIDED. REQUEST YOU TAKE IT UP WITH THEM.

4. ORIGINAL NEWLAND STORY AS FILED WITH THE KHMER CENSOR FOLLOWS:

"THIS NOT A WAR FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PEOPLE, THIS IS A MAIN FORCE WAR WITH THE ENEMY TOTALLY COMMITTED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THIS GOVERNMENT", SAYS AN AMERICAN GENERAL WHO HAS VIEWED THE CONFLICT FIRSTHAND FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.

"THE MAN IS MAJ. GEN. JOHN R. D. CLELAND, A WIRY, AIRBORNE SOLDIER'S SOLDIER WHO, SINCE FEBRUARY, 1972WF HAS BEEN CHIEF OF THE U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT DELIVERY TEAM IN CAMBODIA.

"THE TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING AND

SUPERVISING THE DISTRIBUTION OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OSAMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND AMMUNITION TO THE CAMBODIAN ARMED FORCES.

"CLELAND, 48, IS BEING REASSIGNED NEXT WEEK TO THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS IN WASHINGTON. HE WILL BE SUCCEEDED HERE BY BIRG. GEN. WILLIAM W. PALMER, WHO CURRENTLY IS COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE U.S. ARMY'S 5TH CORPS

ARTILLERY IN DARMSTADT, WEST GERMANY.

"CLELAND, A SOFT-SPOKEN LACONIC MAN, HAS SEEN MANY CHANGES IN THE CAMBODIAN ARMED FORCES DURING HIS TOUR HERE, AND THINKS THE NATION'S FIGHTING ARMS HAVE TURNED THE CORNER FROM THE DAYS WHEN THE ARMY RODE TO BATTLE ATOP PEPSI COLA TRUCKS.

"HE LIKES TO POINT OUT, THAT UNLIKE THE EARLY DAYS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE WAR IN NEIGHBORING VIETNAM, 'THE ENEMY HERE HAS AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZED ARMY DETERMINED TO CARRY OUT ITS GOALS THROUGH TOTAL MILITARY VICTORY. THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PEOPLE,' THE GENERAL SAYS.

"CLELAND SAYS THE CAMBODIAN AIR FORCE, UNDER

THE LEADERSHIP OF BRIG. GEN. EA CHHONG, 'IS DOING
AN INCREDIBLY GOOD JOB WITH THE EQUIPMENT IT HAS TO USE.'

"THE CAMBODIAN AIR FORCE NUMBERS ABOUT 200
PLANES, INCLUDING ABOUT 45 OFTEN-MALIGNED T28S,
AND AN ASSORTMENT OF HELICOPTERS, SPPOKY GUNSHIPS
AND SMALLER COMBAT PLANES.

"CLELAND IS GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE
CAMBODIAN ARMED FORCES WILL HOLD THEIR OWN DURING
THE CURRENT HEAVY COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE, NOW WELL
INTO ITS SECOND MONTH.

"THEY'VE SHOWN THEY CAN HOLD THE ENEMY, AND
IN SOME CASES PUSH THEM BACK, ' CLELAND SAYS, 'BUT
THEY STILL DON'T HAVE THAT EXTRA PUSH TO GO IN FOR THE KILL.'

"THE BALDING GENERAL, WHO COMMANDED AIRBORNE
UNITS IN THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS, ADMITS THE
CAMBODIAN FORCES 'ARE MOSTLY ON THE DEFENSIVE NOW.
THIS CURRENT ENEMY OFFENSIVE PRESENTS THEM WITH
THE SUPREME CHALLENGE. IF THEY PASS THIS, THEN

THEY WILL BE SQUARED AWAY.'

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INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 SPC-03 SAM-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-20 DRC-01

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INFO CJCS WASHDC

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"THE JOB OF THE CAMBODIAN ARMY NOW, CLELAND SAYS 'IS TO HOLD PHNOM PENH AND THE OTHER GOVERNMENT TERRITORY, AND INFLICT AS MANY CASUALTIES AS POSSIBLE ON THE ENEMY.'

"CLELAND ALSO CONTENDS THE END OF AMERICAN BOMBING IN CAMBODIA BY CONGRESSIONAL ORDER LAST AUGUST 15 'WAS NOT ALL THAT TRAUMATIC. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS DURING THIS OFFENSIVE BEARS THAT OUT,' CLELAND SAYS.

"CLELAND STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT IF THE AMERICAN BOMBING HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO CONTINUE, HOWEVER, 'THE ENEMY WOULD BE SITTING AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE NOW.'

"THE GENERAL ALOS BELIEVES THE CONFLICT WILL BE SETTLED POLITICALLY, ADDING 'THIS WAR ISN'T OVER YET, AND THE CAMBODIAN FORCES MUST CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE TO THE COMMUNIST ENEMY THAT HE CAN'T WIN.'"

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5. STORY AS IT APPEARED ON UPI TICKER IS AS FOLLOWS:

"AN AMERICAN GENERAL WITH A FRONT ROW SEAT AT THE CAMBODIAN WAR SAID FRIDAY CAMBODIAN TROOPS HAVE BORNE UP WELL DEFENSIVELY BUT THEY LACK THE INCENTIVE TO LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL OFFENSIVE.

" 'THEY'VE SHOWN THEY CAN HOLD THE ENEMY, AND IN SOME CASES PUSH THEM BACK. BUT TOO OFTEN THEY DON'T HAVE THAT EXTRA PUSH TO GO IN FOR THE KILL,' SAID MAJGEN. JOHN R.D. CLELAND, OUTGOING HEAD OF THE U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT DELIVERY TEAM IN CAMBODIA.

" GOVERNMENT TROOPS ARE MAINLY ON THE DEFENSIVE NOW, HE SAID. 'THIS CURRENT ENEMY OFFENSIVE PRESENTS THEM WITH THE SUPREME CHALLENGE. IF THEY PASS THIS, THEN THEY WILL BE SQUARED AWAY,' HE SAID."

"CLELAND, 48, A BALDING WIRY PARATROOPER WHO COMMANDED AIRBORNE UNITS IN KOREA AND VIETNAM, WILL LEAVE CAMBODIA NEXT WEEK AFTER TWO YEARS TO JOIN THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS IN THE PENTAGON.

"HIS SUCCESSOR WILL BE BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM W. PALMER, CURRENTLY COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY'S 5TH CORPS ARTILLERY IN DARMSTADT, WEST GERMANY.

"UNLIKE THE EARLY DAYS IN VIETNAM, CLELAND SAID THE CAMBODIAN REBELS ARE NOT TRYING FOR A POLITICAL VICTORY.

" 'THE ENEMY HERE HAS AN EFFECTIVE, ORGANIZED ARMY DETERMINED TO CARRY OUT ITS GOAL THROUGHOUT TOTAL MILITARY VICTORY. THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PEOPLE,' HE SAID.

" THIS IS NOT A WAR FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE PEOPLE. THIS IS A MAIN FORCE WAR WITH THE ENEMY TOTALLY COMMITTED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THIS GOVERNMENT,' CLELAND SAID.

"COMMUNIST HAVE SURROUNDED PHNOM PENH AND ARE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE CAPITAL TO SHELL IT WITH CAPTURED AMERICAN-MADE 105MM HOWITZERS. AT LEAST 168 PERSONS WERE KILLED IN A SINGLE ARTILLERY ATTACK ON MONDAY.

"CLELAND SAID THE CAMBODIAN TROOPS' MAIN JOB NOW IS TO HOLD THE CAPITAL 'AND INFLICT AS MANY CASUALTIES AS POSSIBLE ON THE ENEMY.'

"CLELAND ALSO SAID HE BELIEVED CAMBODIAN PEACE TALKS WOULD BE UNDERWAY NOW IF AMERICANS HAD NOT STOPPED BOMBING ON AUG. 15.

"THE ENEMY WOULD BE SITTING AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE NOW,' HE SAID."
ENDERS

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